GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:221
ANSWERED ON:02.08.2016
Conservation of Bio-diversity
Kodikunnil Shri Suresh

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the initiative taken by the Government for the conservation of bio-diversity and resources in the country so far;

(b) whether various interventions and activities in the forest areas have severely affected the biodiversity of plant and animal life an various parts of the country and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;

(c) the steps taken by the Government to regulate interventions and other activities in the forest areas in order to safeguard the flora and fauna of the country; and;

(d) the present status of implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Committee constituted to review Acts administered by the Ministry?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIORNMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 221 TO BE ANSWERED ON 2.8.2016 REGARDING CONSERVATION OF BIO-DIVERSITY BY SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH.

(a) Some important initiatives taken by the Government for conservation of biological diversity inter alia include: survey, inventorization, taxonomic validation and threat assessment of floral and faunal resources; assessment of the forest cover to develop an accurate database for planning and monitoring; establishment of a Protected Area Network of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation and Community Reserves; designating Biosphere Reserves for conservation of representative ecosystems; undertaking of species oriented programmes, such as Project Tiger and Project Elephant; complemented with ex-situ conservation efforts. In addition, Biological Diversity Act 2002 has also been enacted with the aim to conserve biological resources of the country and regulation of access to these resources to ensure equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their use, under which a National Biodiversity Authority and State Biodiversity Boards in all States have been set up for implementing the provisions of the Act.

(b) and (c) The Government has put in place several measures towards ensuring that interventions and activities in forest areas do no adversely affect the biodiversity.

For ensuring protection of flora and fauna within protected areas, Management Plans are prepared by State Forest Departments which inter alia include a schedule of activities to be taken up over a period of ten years. The Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 provides for diligence to be taken before approval of any activity is accorded by the State Government within a protected area.

In addition, the Central Government provides financial assistance to States and Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as : Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat; Project Tiger, and Project Elephant for better protection and conservation of wildlife and their habitat; and Identification of Forest Management Scheme towards protection and management of forests. The Government supports conservation of some prioritised/threatened medicinal plants harboured in specially designated Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas (MPCAs) that are primarily forested areas.

The National Afforestation & Eco-development Board of the Ministry promotes afforestation, tree planting, ecological restoration and ecodevelopment activities in the country, with special attention to degraded areas as well as ecologically fragile areas.

Notwithstanding these measures, various non-forestry activities undertaken in forest areas for mining, industries, hydel power development, irrigation dams, railways, roads and other essential developmental activities may lead to destruction of forests and biodiversity in the diverted forest areas. The forest area diverted since 1980 States/UTs-wise is given in Appendix. In order to compensate this loss of forest areas and biodiversity, compensatory afforestation on equivalent non forest land is done to compensate the loss of forest and biodiversity and such non forest lands are declared as Protected Forests/Reserve Forests under Indian Forest Act 1927. In case of Central Government PSU projects, compensatory afforestation is done over twice the area of degraded forest area at the cost of user agency to improve and conserve the biodiversity in the degraded forest.

(d) The High Level Committee (HLC) constituted under the chairmanship of Shri T.S.R. Subramanian, former Cabinet Secretary, to

undertake retrospection exercise in the functioning of various Acts administered by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), namely, (i) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, (ii) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, (iii) Indian Forest Act, 1927, (iv) Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, (v) Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and (vi) Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, has submitted its report, wherein 55 recommendations have been made.

In order to prepare a framework based on the recommendations of HLC, MoEFCC selected M/s Ernst & Young and M/s Amarchand & Mangaldas & Suresh A. Shroff & Co. consortium as the Technical Consultant. The Technical Consultant has submitted inception report and gap assessment report to the Ministry and also made presentation.

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